The CHILDREN'S SIX MINUTES

BRUCE S. WRIGHT

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THE CHILDREN'S SIX MINUTES

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BY

BRUCE S. WRIGHT

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TO

HARRIET

ELIZABETH

AND

ROBERT

INTRODUCTION

For many years it has been my custom to give, every Sunday morning, a brief sermon to the boys and girls of my congregation. This sermon is never more than six minutes, often only three. As a result there has been a growing attendance of young people at our morning worship. They are thus made to feel that they are wanted, and have a part in the Church which all too often is looked upon as a Church solely for the grownups. No part of my ministry has given me greater delight and satisfaction than the thought that I am helping to establish in the lives of many boys and girls that habit so indispensable to a steady Christian experience, namely—the habit of Sunday morning worship.

The Memory Texts and Memory Hymns, from the Methodist Episcopal Hymnal, suggested with each sermon are given for the reason that girls and boys gladly do memory work if it is definitely assigned them.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
HAPPY NEW YEAR	12
GROWTH	14
SNOW	16
KINDNESS	18
GOD'S CALL	20
A HAPPY HOME	22
SYSTEM	24
A BOY FROM THE COUNTRY	26
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IN THE WORLD	28
EASTER LIGHT	30
APRIL	32
HELPING FINGERS	34
TWO R'S AND AN A	36
CANDLE CHILDREN	38
ALAS, THE MARKS	40
A BLIND MAN WHO SAW	42
CHOOSING A KING	44
WORSHIP AND TOIL	46
GOD'S CLOCK	48
THE HUMAN KODAK	50
WATCH LESSONS	52
WHAT DID YOU SEE?	54
KNIFE LESSONS	56
LETTERS	58
A UNIQUE PSALM	60
THE FATHER'S CARE	62

PAGE

YOKES 64
GOOD ADVICE 66
IF I WERE A BOY AGAIN 68
ONE BY ONE 70
COME 72
LOVE AND LOYALTY 74
KUMMOGOKDONATTOOTTAMMOCTITEAONGANNUN-NONASH 76
WHAT THE TREES SAID TO ME 78
BANKS 80
WORK 82
THE BIG STORE 84
BREAD 86
GOD'S MEASURE 88
SLEEP 90
ON TIME 92
DOORS 94
CHEAPEST AND BEST 96
IN THE DARK 98
THE STILL SMALL VOICE 100
THANKSGIVING 102
MARBLES IN THE POCKET 104
THE FIRST MONTH 106
HIM AND HYMN 108
THE CHRISTMAS TREE 110
THE BEST WORD 112
LAST BUT NOT LEAST 114

THE CHILDREN'S SIX MINUTES

HAPPY NEW YEAR

HAPPY NEW YEAR, Juniors!

The morning of the first day of every year we enter into a contest. We see who will be the first to give that day's greeting. Before I was awake this morning my boy ran into my room shouting, "Happy New Year! Happy New Year!" He won in the contest.

Now, however, you are in Church and it is not proper for you to speak out loud, so I am able to get ahead of you. A Happy New Year to you, every one.

Well, what will make this year a happy year for you? I will tell you. Let us take this word Happy, and instead of writing it across the page let us write it straight up and down.

H stands for Helpful. You cannot have a happy year unless you are helpful. He who does not try to be helpful is never very happy.

A for Active. I want your year to be full of activity. I hope you will be able to skate and slide down hill many days this winter, and that

you will enter into all the spring and summer sports with zest and joy.

P for Playful. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. You will want to do something other than play, of course. You will have some home responsibilities, but sandwiched in with the work may there be a good measure of play.

P for Purposeful. Yes, early in life you should form a purpose. Two questions will help you gain that purpose. 1st—What is it that I want to do? 2nd—What is it that God wants me to do?

Y for Youth.

Helpful
Active
Playful
Purposeful
Youth.

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 19: 14

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

MEMORY HYMN, [572]

"Break, newborn year, on glad eyes break."

GROWTH

THIS second Sunday morning of the New Year I desire to talk to you about growth. The most important holiday afterthought is the thought of growth. You are going to grow every day of this year. Whenever I see a boy on his way to school, or on the field or gymnasium floor, running, romping, playing, I say to myself, "Can it be possible that this restless, energetic lad was ever a quiet, helpless little babe in the cradle!" Yes, he was, but he has grown, and he is going to keep right on growing.

It was said of the boy Jesus, "He grew." His growth was natural. There was nothing of precociousness in the childhood of Jesus. He grew, just as every boy grows.

> "A simple-hearted child was he,
> And he was nothing more;
> In summer days, like you and me,
> He played about the door,
> Or gathered, where the father toiled,
> The shavings from the floor."

His growth continued. It did not stop with

childhood, but right on through boyhood, youth and manhood he kept growing. Best of all his growth was balanced. He grew physically, mentally and spiritually. He had a sound body. He loved the out-of-doors. He companionshiped much with nature. Most of his graphic illustrations were taken from living, growing things. He talked, almost chiefly, about seeds, grain, harvests, trees, birds and living waters. Boys and girls, strive to grow. Be like your Master who grew inward, outward, and upward; self-ward, manward, and Godward. "How can I grow?" you ask. I will tell you by passing on to you the secret as given by Maltbie Babcock.

Go
Right
On
Working

MEMORY VERSE, *Luke* 2: 40

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

MEMORY HYMN [681]

"Brightly gleams our banner."

SNOW

"GOODY, goody, it's snowing!" This is what I heard early yesterday morning. I think there were many other homes in which this shout of joy ushered in the day. It being Saturday the day was mostly free for playing in the snow. What did you do? You made a snow man. You built a snow fort or house. You had a snowball battle. You slid down hill. You played fox and geese, tracking one another across white fields and through the woods. You had a happy, wonderful day, I know you did.

Have you ever thought how snow is made, and whence it comes? It is formed high in the air, from vapor, and comes down from the clouds, just like rain. Snowdrops are like people in one respect, no two are alike. If you will look at the snowflakes through a magnifying glass you will see a great variety of shapes. And all of them are beautiful. We talk about the sparkling beauty of diamonds and other precious gems; crystal snowflakes are more beautiful by far. If only we could keep them from melting

what a necklace or a setting for a ring a collection of snowflakes would make!

God's love is shown to us in the snow. For a fall of snow is like a great blanket, covering the tender roots and seeds, keeping them from freezing, assuring us of another harvest. As to-day you walk home through the snow let it speak to you of your Father's love.

MEMORY VERSE, *Job* 38: 22

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"

MEMORY HYMN [355]

"Love divine, all loves excelling."

KINDNESS

ONE day last week I saw a huge pair of bobs, heavily loaded with coal, being pulled up the street by two big, fine-looking horses. There were two men on the load. Their faces were black, but it was the dirt of honest toil, it was coal dust. They stopped the horses in front of the house directly across the street from me. I watched them with interest. The first thing one of the men did was to get down, take a board, go around to the front of the horses, lift up the heavy wagon tongue, place the board underneath it as a brace that the necks of the horses might be relieved of the strain of the wagon tongue. At the same time the other man took two warm blankets and covered the horses with them, tucking in the corners beneath the harness to make them tight and warm. Then the men set to work to carry the coal, basket by basket, into the cellar. That was kindness, was it not, to see that the horses were so well cared for on a cold winter day!

To my mind one of the finest acts of our city

government is the way we are taught kindness to dumb animals and birds, by permitting them to make their homes and nests in the public park. What a delight it is to walk through the park and have the squirrels come running up so close, to eat from one's hand! That is kindness.

How about kindness to people? Have you ever seen an older person walking along the street with a little child of three or four years of age, the child reaching up as far as he could to take the hand of the older person, the older one jerking, pulling, yanking, all the while saying, "Come now, hurry up, hurry up." That is not kindness, is it?

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

MEMORY VERSE, *Ephesians* 4: 32

"Be ye kind to one another."

MEMORY HYMN [554]

"How sweet, how heavenly is the sight!"

GOD'S CALL

GOD calls each one of you. He asks you to give your life to him. He has a special work for you to do. You have heard of Wendell Phillips who did so much to make slavery unlawful in America! Once, when Wendell was a boy fourteen years of age, he heard Lyman Beecher preach. In the course of his sermon the preacher said, "You belong to God." The boy Wendell thought that the preacher looked straight at him when he said that. He went to his home at the close of the service, climbed the stairs to his room, shut the door, knelt in prayer, saying, "O God, I belong to thee, take what is thine own." He heard and answered God's call.

Many, many years before Wendell Phillips lived there was another boy. He worked in the temple. He was a youthful assistant to the minister. I suppose he ran errands for him, and performed any and every service about the temple the minister desired. One night, as usual, the boy went to bed and fell asleep. As he slept he heard a voice calling him. Now he

was an obedient boy, and though it was hard for him to rouse himself from a sound sleep and leave his comfortable bed he did so. He ran to the minister saying, "Here I am, you called me, what do you want?" The minister said, "No, my boy, I did not call you, go back to bed." The boy returned to his bed and again went to sleep. A second time, and even a third time he was called. Each time the faithful, obedient lad leaped from his couch and ran to the minister. The third time it dawned on the mind of the minister that the voice the lad heard was the voice of God, calling him to himself and to his special service. Being a wise and loving man he said to the boy, "Return to your bed, and if you hear the call again, say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" The boy did as instructed and that night was forever memorable in his life, for that was the night God called Samuel and Samuel answered.

MEMORY VERSE, *I Samuel* 3: 10

"And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth."

MEMORY HYMN [674]

"Hushed was the evening hymn."

A HAPPY HOME

THIS morning, the first thing, my boy said to me, "Tell me a story." This is the story I told him. Once upon a time, it was a long, long time ago, so long ago that we can scarcely realize how long, more than twenty-five hundred years ago. Well, once upon a time there was a home—homes then were quite the same in most ways as homes are now—there were children in that home. They played and were happy. And too, I suppose they had their misunderstandings, and sometimes the children quarreled. One day the children heard music. Looking up the street they saw a great company of men marching right toward them. They were soldiers. There were thirty thousand of them. In the center of the marching army were some oxen. The oxen were harnessed to a fine, new cart. On the cart was a chest, most beautifully carved and decorated. On the soldiers came. What was the amazement of the boys and girls when they stopped right in front of their house! Then the king, majestic in his

bearing and gorgeously arrayed, came to their father and said, "I want to leave this chest here in your house. Take good care of it." The king's men brought the wonderful chest within, set it down, went out, and the army marched away. From that hour the home was a different home. There was joy, and peace, and an utter absence of quarreling. Three months passed by. Then one day the king came again and took the chest away. But peace and happiness did not depart with the chest. The home was as happy and peaceful and free from bickering through all the coming months as through the three when the wonderful chest was in the house. What was the chest? It was not the king's chest; it was the ark of God. You will find this true story in Second Samuel, the sixth chapter.

MEMORY VERSE, *II Samuel* 6: 11

"And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months; and the Lord blessed him, and all his household."

MEMORY HYMN [671]

"O happy home, where thou art loved the dearest."

SYSTEM

HERE are three books. I put them down like this, one beside the other, that is system. I throw them down carelessly, that is not system, it is not orderly.

Here is a little box. Inside are letters, such as you see on the sign in front of the Church. Each letter has a space all its own. Now if A were put down at M, M at Z, and E at X, what a task it would be to pick out the letters and make a sign!

One day I visited a Chinese school. Such lack of system, such disorderliness I never did see! Such noise I never did hear! They were all studying at the tops of their voices, sitting around in all sorts of ways, each trying to outshout the other. Another day I went into a school here in our city. I saw the desks arranged in systematic fashion, each child with a desk all his own. In front I saw a platform, with a larger desk, for the teacher. All was quiet and orderly.

Here I have a package of envelopes. There

are fifty-two envelopes, one for each Sunday in the year. Each envelope is divided in the center. On one side I read, "For others." On the other half I read, "For ourselves." I need not tell you that these are church envelopes. In this way, this systematic way, we support our local church and pay to missions. We like to have the girls and boys, as well as older people, use these envelopes. The financial secretary of your church is just as willing to keep the records of young people who give but five cents in each side of the envelope as he is to keep the account of the man or woman who places five dollars in each side of the envelope every Sunday. You see we want you to grow up systematic and orderly in all your religious life. Our Master is pleased when we do our religious duties "decently and in order."

MEMORY VERSE, *I Corinthians* 16: 2

> "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

MEMORY HYMN [631]

> *"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun."*

A BOY FROM THE COUNTRY

ONCE upon a time there was a boy who lived in the country. It was said of him that he was "ruddy and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." I think that description fits a country lad. Well, this boy had brothers who were away from home in the army, fighting. One day the boy's father said to him, "I wish you would go down and see how your brothers are getting along, and take with you this present." The boy started on his journey. Now when he came to the place where the soldiers were encamped he saw a strange sight. A giant, from the opposing army, came out, blustering and issuing his challenge to any one who would dare come against him. All seemed afraid of him. Even the big, strong soldiers would not do battle with him. Therefore this youth from the country volunteered saying, "I will go out and fight him." They tried to dissuade him, but he insisted. Now he was a perfect shot with the sling. He

chose five smooth stones from the brook. With one of these he prevailed over the giant.

This lad, however, had some other things which stood him in better stead even than the sling and the stones. What were they? First, he had courage. He possessed what all the others lacked. Second, he had the ability to do one thing and do that one thing well. He could use a sling with the utmost accuracy. Third, he had confidence in himself and faith in God. He was not conceited, no, we do not like that. Rather he had self-confidence. Above all was this—"I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts." So said the lad from the country as he went to fight the giant. What was his name? It is a good name—David.

MEMORY VERSE, *I Samuel* 17: 45

> "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts."

MEMORY HYMN [416]

> *"Faith of our fathers."*

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IN THE WORLD

THE most beautiful thing in the world! Now what is it? If you will lift your eyes just a little you will see the flowers on the table, but lift them higher than the flowers, higher than this pulpit, higher than the pipes of the organ, above the lights, above the arch, you will see the most beautiful thing in the world. Do you see it? It is the Cross.

Do you know, girls and boys, that long ago the cross was the most repulsive thing in the world? It was odious. It had none of the charm and beauty that is now woven about it. But from the day that Jesus was crucified on the cross it took on new meaning, and it has grown in charm and power until I think we all agree that it is the most beautiful sight in the world.

Out in Colorado, high up the side of a mountain, where the snow never melts in the crevices, may be seen two long ravines, one straight up and down, the other straight across. The snow

is packed into those ravines all through the year, and lifting the eyes one may see upon the lofty mountain side the Holy Cross.

In the summer seas, one of the things that mariners are guided by and that tourists look for, is the Southern Cross. There it is, fashioned by the position of the stars in the clear skies of the tropics.

There are many men who wear a cross as a watch fob. There are women who wear a cross as a pendant about the neck. This is an outward sign of an inner devotion. The important thing, my dear young Christians, is to have the cross, its power and meaning, stamped upon one's heart. Is that where you wear the Saviour's cross?

MEMORY VERSE, *I Corinthians* 1: 18

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto them which are saved it is the power of God."

MEMORY HYMN [143]

"In the cross of Christ I glory."

EASTER LIGHT

THIS glad morning, when the world is so bright and beautiful, I want to talk to you about Easter Light.

One of the most interesting men in our city is a man who goes about our streets with two long sticks. He is the lamplighter. Here he comes down the street! See how he pauses at each lamp post. With one stick he pulls the little chain that turns on the gas; with the other he sets the light going. He walks into the dark, but he leaves behind him miles of lighted streets. I hope we shall have always many streets lighted with gas, for I love to see the lamplighter dot his way along the streets and avenues with lighted periods.

In the center of our city is the tall Electric Light Building. On the very tip of the tower is a high power electric light. It is lighted every evening from eight to eleven o'clock. Children, looking out of their windows as they go to bed, think that it is another star in the sky, it is so bright and steady.

More wonderful than any of these lights is the source of all light. It is the light that God provides for all of his children. The sun warms our fields, makes our gardens grow, and causes our harvests to prosper. The sun never fails us.

Now there is another light, a light that is above even the sun. That is the light of Easter day. The tomb of death is no longer dark, for the resurrection light brightens every corner and shines in radiance through the open doorway. The light of Easter also lights up the windows of our heavenly home. When you are out of an evening it is not pleasant to return to a dark house. There is a wondrous welcome in lighted windows. That welcome God gives us in the light of Easter day. Christ, and his resurrection, shine in the windows of heaven to greet us when we go home.

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 28: 1

> "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."

MEMORY HYMN [156]

> *"Christ the Lord is risen to-day."*

APRIL

I HAVE in my hand a small branch from a big tree. This branch is from an apple tree. Here are seen the tiny buds, the promise of the blossom, and after that the fruit. Have you ever seen an apple orchard in blossom? People rave about the cherry blossoms of Japan, and the fire trees, flaming red, of the Philippines. I have been in both countries, but I think there is no more beautiful sight in any country than the blossoming apple orchards of America.

As you came to church this morning you saw all along the streets and avenues hundreds of trees like this branch, sending forth their first buds. What do these buds tell us?

First of all they tell us of God. I do not see how any one can live through the awakening spring season and not think daily thoughts of God. Most people remember the Creator. Only one person has ever denied God. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." He said it to himself, he did not dare speak it out loud.

In the second place, this branch tells us of God's Love. He, the loving Father of all people, makes blessed provision for the care and nurture of his children. He reminds us each year, in seedtime and harvest, of his boundless love. His love never fails. There have been many hundreds of years in the history of the world, yet each year has had its spring, its seedtime, and its Resurrection. Young people, let God's April speak to you.

"When I am gone, somehow I hope that April
Will typify my life, my faith,
My hope of victory through the years,
My steadiness of step, my clear and visioned eye.
The early flowers, the birds
Singing in the rain,
The increasing light, the slowly opening buds,
The almond blooms, the trees in vernal dress
Are like the silver crown upon the head;
A prophecy of heaven's summer time.
Yes, even now it is the April
Of my great immortality."

MEMORY VERSE, *John* 11: 25

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life."

MEMORY HYMN [389]

"Sow in the morn thy seed."

HELPING FINGERS

FOR three years I lived in Manila, Philippine Islands. Not far from my home was an orphanage for children who were deaf and dumb. Frequently these children were seen at different entertainments that were given about the city. One evening I went to attend a lecture in the Y.M.C.A. Right in front of me sat three children. They were very quiet and orderly. When the lecture began the boy who sat in the middle began to make his fingers go as fast as he could, the two children on either side watching him intently. That center boy could hear, the other two were deaf. So he heard the lecture for them and told it to them by the finger language.

One day a girl, coming out from school, got on a street car to go to her home. The car was crowded. She found a seat next to a woman who was heavily laden with bundles. She had all she could do to hold those bundles in her lap and keep them from falling and scattering their contents on the floor. Then a string about one

of the packages became untied. She struggled to get that string fastened securely. She had so many packages, her fingers were numb with cold, and again and again the string slipped just at the crucial time. Finally this school girl, who was an attractive, well-dressed girl, reached over and placed her nicely gloved finger on the obstreperous knot. There was a grateful smile from the troubled woman and a hearty "Thank you." The next stop was the girl's home. As she went to the end of the car she passed a school friend who had watched the little incident. She said to her, "I see you belong to the helping hand society." "No," replied the girl, "not the helping hand, just the helping finger society." This is a great society, girls and boys. Admission to it requires no initiation fee, no dues, simply the desire and the will to be helpful wherever you are.

MEMORY VERSE, *Ecclesiastes* 9: 10

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

MEMORY HYMN [349]

"Saviour, thy dying love thou gavest me."

TWO R'S AND AN A

DO you know what week this is? We have all sorts of weeks, don't we! There is Sunday School week, Go to Church week, Boy Scout week, Red Cross week, Social Welfare week, Hospital week, Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A. week. Sometimes we wish we could have one week all to ourselves.

Well, this is a special week. It is called Good Literature week. I want to tell you about Good Literature week by the use of these three letters, two R's and an A.

The first R stands for Read. By all means read. There is no excuse for not reading, there is so much to read. Indeed I think that is the chief difficulty, we have too much, at least too much of that which is not good to read. Here's the bulky daily paper. When it is delivered there is a rush for it. The children want the comic supplement. So do some of the grown-ups.

"A little nonsense now and then,
Is relished by the wisest men."

That is true, and all right, but read something beside the comics.

The second R is Remember. You cannot remember all that you read. You can remember much. You should train your mind to remember the best. John Ruskin, one of the most gifted of Englishmen, said, "To this I owe all that I have of power, to the fact that when I was a boy my mother made me learn, every day, and remember, a verse of the Bible."

Now the A. The A stands for, can you guess? It means Action. Read, remember what you read, and then apply it, put it into action. It is a fine thing to read a story like Pollyanna and get all excited over it. It is much finer to read Pollyanna and then put her spirit into action in the daily life of the home.

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 119: 11

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

MEMORY HYMN [201]

"How precious is the book divine!"

CANDLE CHILDREN

WHAT is this I have here? It is a candle in a candlestick. There is something about a candle we all love. We have our clear gas lights and our still more brilliant electric bulbs, but when the birthday comes we want a cake with candles on it. Think of this as a birthday candle and let it speak to you.

First of all this candle speaks of Symmetry. How perfectly formed is this candle! It is smooth, there are no rough places that stand out like an ugly wart on one's face. Your life should have symmetry. God asks you to give heed to your physical, your mental and your spiritual duties that your life may be well rounded, a life of beautiful symmetry.

Second, this candle stands for Fragrance. This is a fragrant candle. It is what is known as a "barberry" candle. There are some children we do not like to have around, they are surly, sulky and mean. There are others we dearly love to have with us at all times. They have what I call fragrance. They have the

fragrance of thoughtfulness, the sweetness of unselfishness.

In the third place this candle means Erectness. How straight it stands in the candlestick! Stand up straight, girls and boys. Do not stoop. Do not hump yourself over your school desk. Walk erect. It means so much now, it will mean much more in later years. Some day, if you heed my word, you will be grateful that the preacher once said to you so emphatically that you could not forget, "John, Mary, stand up straight."

Fourth, the candle stands for Light. It is useless until the wick is lighted. It burns for others. Your life is a light. Jesus wants all Christians to think of themselves as lights in the world. "Let your light shine." Be a lighted candle for the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE, *Proverbs* 20: 27

"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."

MEMORY HYMN [84]

"The spacious firmament on high."

ALAS, THE MARKS

THERE is an old, old story about a father who had great difficulty in making his boy obey. The boy did wrong in spite of all that the father could say or do. One day the father said to the boy, "Here is the shed door, now every time you do wrong I am going to pound a nail into the door." One by one the nails were pounded into the door, until it was literally filled with nails. The boy did not like the looks of the door, the thought of it began to trouble his conscience. So he spoke to his father about it. "Well," said his father, "I'll tell you what we will do. Every time you are obedient, every time you do a good deed rather than a wrong one, we will pull a nail out." The bargain was struck, and as, one by one, the nails were driven in, so, one by one, they were pulled out.

Finally the day arrived when there was but one nail left. You can imagine the joy of the boy when he and his father went together to pull that nail out. With great glee the claws

of the hammer were fastened about the head of Mr. Nail and, jerk, out he came. "Oh," exclaimed the boy, "the marks are left." Yes, it was true, for every nail driven in and pulled out a mark was left, and it was an ugly looking door. "That is the sad thing about it all," said the father, "every time you do an evil deed a mark is left upon the life. It is never the same as if the evil deed had not been committed. It is fine that we have all the nails out, but it would have been much better had they never been driven in."

MEMORY VERSE, *Jeremiah* 2: 22

"For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God."

MEMORY HYMN [348]

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee."

A BLIND MAN WHO SAW

ONCE upon a time there was a boy who had a call to be a preacher. Now this boy was Scotch, and the fondest ambition of a Scotch mother is that her son shall become a minister. You may believe that this particular lad's mother was very, very happy. So George (George was his name) went to school. He was not a brilliant student, but he was faithful, he did his work well and passed his grades. One day he noted some difficulty with his eyes. The trouble increased rather than diminished. Before he had finished his education, while he was yet a young man, he became totally blind. He was greatly discouraged. He was tempted to give up entirely, stop trying to do anything. Certainly he could not be a successful preacher if he was blind. Who would listen to him? How could he do his work?

However there was another voice inside him, the voice of courage, hope and faith. It was the voice of the Lord that bid him go right on with his plans. He heeded the urge of the inner

voice. He was ordained. People loved him, and flocked to hear him preach. Though his natural vision was darkened, his spiritual vision was so much brighter. Though he could not look upon the beautiful sights of the world, he had eyes to see more clearly the wonderful things of the soul. His fame spread throughout Edinburgh, Scotland, England, and all the English-speaking world, and everywhere he was known and loved as the blind preacher.

This blind preacher wrote many hymns. The greatest hymn he ever wrote, and one of the finest in all the English language, is the Memory Hymn for to-day.

His name? Well, I almost forgot that. His name is George Matheson.

Memory Verse, *Isaiah* 42: 16

> "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

Memory Hymn [481]

> *"O love that wilt not let me go."*

CHOOSING A KING

WHAT would you do if you were asked to select a young man who should some day be president of the United States? What tests would you apply? Would you look upon the clothes that he wore? Would you consider the color of his hair? Would you insist that he should be of a certain height? Once upon a time there was a good and wise man who was asked to choose a king for his people. He started on his journey in search of the most promising youth he could find. By and by he came to a home where there were many boys. One of these boys stood before him. He was tall. He was well formed. He had a good bearing. Surely, thought the king-chooser, here is just the man. But something inside him, "the still small voice" I think it was, said to him, "No, do not choose him, he is not the one." The father then called a second son. Like the first he was goodly to look upon. The great man commissioned to choose a king was about to select this one when the same voice inside

warned him to wait. A third son was summoned. A third time the voice said, "No, he is not the one."

How chagrined the father must have been to have all seven of his splendid sons rejected! All? No, not all. For the king-chooser said, "Have you no more sons?" "Yes, I have one other, but he is young and the keeper of the sheep. I am sure you would not think of him as a king." "Nevertheless," said the prophet, "send for him." And he came, the youngest, the most unlikely one of all, at least so the father and the brothers thought. But the voice within said, "This is the one, choose him." You will want to read all of this wonderful story and you will find it in your Bible, First Samuel the sixteenth chapter.

MEMORY VERSE, *I Samuel* 16: 7

> "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for the man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

MEMORY HYMN [354]

"O for a heart to praise my God."

WORSHIP AND TOIL

ONE day about one hundred years ago a little boy named Jean stood by his father's side watching the setting sun sink into the waves of the sea. The glory of the scene stirred his boyish enthusiasm and he poured out his heart in an ecstasy of joy. The father reverently took off his cap and said, "My son, it is God." The boy never forgot that word, "It is God."

Jean came of a peasant family, so he had to take his place in the field and earn his bread "by the sweat of his brow." On Sundays the fields were forsaken and the family went to the village church where the father was the leader of the choir. After church friends and relatives sometimes came home to spend the afternoon with the family. One Sunday, soon after the return from church, the bent figure of an aged peasant slowly made his way along the road. There was something about the figure that struck the boy Jean. He took a piece of charcoal and hurriedly drew a sketch upon the

wall. Every movement and attitude was so perfectly depicted that everybody laughed—everybody but the father. He sensed the gift possessed by his boy, whose growing talent he had been watching. "My Jean," he said, "I will no longer hinder you from learning that which you are so anxious to know."

Jean Francis Millet, for such is his full name, became the artist of peasantry. He never made any other boast. His character was of the highest. He had a firm faith in God. He believed in the Bible as the Word of God. He looked upon his use of the brush as preaching upon canvas the purity and truth he believed.

"The Angelus" is the name of the best known picture that he painted. It shows two workers in a potato field, a man and a woman, who hear from the near-by village the faint tones of the Angelus bell calling them to prayer. They pause, stand erect, bow their heads and worship. It is a beautiful picture. I hope you have a copy framed in your room.

MEMORY VERSE, *Luke* 11: 1

"Lord, teach us to pray."

MEMORY HYMN [495]

"From every stormy wind that blows."

GOD'S CLOCK

DO you own a watch? If you do not now you will some day. I have a friend whose watch came to him in this wise. His father said to him, "When you graduate from High School I will give you a watch."

Is there a "town clock" where you live? Is it dependable? Do men set their watches by it? Do people, passing it, glance up to see if they are late? In the village where I began my ministry the Baptist tower held the town clock. I lived but a few doors away. I went to bed by it. I studied by it. I was wakened by it. Even now, and many years have passed since then, I can hear its clear bell strike the hours.

The strangest clock I ever saw was in China. I went up the West River to the city of Canton. I was carried through the narrow, smelly, crowded streets to the top of a little hill at the city's edge. There, on the very tip-top I saw the "Water Clock." I read, "This water clock is a most ancient, authentic, celebrated and sacred relic of Kwong Tung Province, over 1,300 years

old. It was erected on the top story of the north Worshiping Tower which was built by Chin To, King of the South of China."

It was a strange, crude affair, run by water. I stood and looked at it and thought, "This clock was running when George Washington was president; it was running when Christopher Columbus sailed on his great voyage of discovery; long years, long centuries before that it was built."

But there is a clock surpassing all others. I call it God's clock. It is the Sun. Since time began God's clock has kept time. It is the central clock of our universe. It regulates all others. It does not have to be wound. God has seen to that. How can we help worshiping the God who has made such a clock!

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 74: 16

"The day is thine, the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun."

MEMORY HYMN [47]

"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear."

THE HUMAN KODAK

I WONDER how many of you have a kodak. Yes, many of you own one. What a wonderful little machine a kodak is! First we buy a film, then we open the kodak and place the film. Now pull the paper over to the empty roll and fasten, close the kodak and begin to wind. Oh, here you are, No. 1. The day is clear, for we must have a clear day to get the best picture. We hold the kodak very steady, then snap, we have it. Next we pull a little slide in the back, take a pencil and write down the date and name. Let me see, what was that picture? Oh, yes, "Chrysanthemum (is that the way to spell it?) exhibition." Next the films are developed, and the kodak pictures are complete, all but pasting them in a big book.

For all that the kodak is a whole lot of fuss, isn't it? But, do you know, each one of us has a kodak God has given him which works itself. We have the open circle through which the pictures are taken, our eyes, and beyond the eyes, in the brain, are thousands of films. We start

out in the morning and the moment we open our eyes we begin exposing those films. We do not have to do any clicking for these pictures, one after another, click, click, click, and they are developed as fast as they are taken.

If you should say to a man who has reached three score years and ten, "Tell me the clearest picture you can remember," he would not show a picture that was taken yesterday, or last week, or last year. He would turn back the pages of his memory book fifty, sixty years. The clearest pictures he possesses are those that were snapped in his boyhood. Every day you are taking pictures that are going to remain with you as long as you live. Let us resolve, girls and boys, that as we go out each morning and our human kodak begins clicking, we shall take only pictures that are true, pure and clean.

MEMORY VERSE, *Proverbs* 4: 25

"Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee."

MEMORY HYMN [1]

"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise."

WATCH LESSONS

MY grandfather was a foreman in a tannery for a great many years. Finally, as he was approaching seventy years of age, he left the tannery to retire to a quieter life. The men who worked in his department had a real affection for him. As an expression of that esteem they presented him, on his last day with them, a beautiful, solid gold watch. On the inner cover they engraved his name, the date, and the occasion of the presentation. When my grandfather died the watch became my father's possession. Then upon my father's death the watch came to me. What a joy it is to carry such a watch! Here are some lessons my watch teaches me.

The case is but the outside. It is nice to have a gold case, it looks so well. But that does not make the watch keep any better time. It would keep just as accurate time if the case were iron. You see it is the inside that counts. It is the same with life. The soul is the important part of us.

Now here is the tiny second hand. It rushes around, jumping, hurrying, fussy, as though it were doing the whole job. But you cannot tell time by the second hand. Knock it off and the watch goes right on running.

Here's the minute hand. How big, and solemn and serious it looks! Surely the minute hand is important. What time is it? Fifteen minutes after. Fifteen minutes after what? The minute hand does not say.

Ah, here's the hour hand. Strong, steady, dependable. The hour hand does not move very fast, you cannot see it move. It makes no fuss at all, but you can tell time by the hour hand. Let your life be like the hour hand of the watch, so true and steady that other girls and boys who daily watch you may know life's time, may never be led astray.

MEMORY VERSE, *I Corinthians* 15: 58

"Therefore, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

MEMORY HYMN [385]

"Soldiers of the cross, arise!"

WHAT DID YOU SEE?

A FEW days ago I made a trip on the train. When I returned home one of the first questions my little boy asked me was, "What did you see?" I shall tell you what I told him.

Looking out of the car window I saw an immense field, acres and acres, and in that field were planted hundreds, yes thousands, of little trees. I inquired of the man who sat next me, "What are those little trees for?" He said, "They are growing those little trees to reforest the desolate, burned over regions of the Adirondacks." I said to myself, "That is just what we are doing in my church. We are growing girls and boys to reforest the needy places of the earth." I inquired, "How long do they keep those little trees there?" "Not very long," said he, "just long enough to give them a good start. Then they transplant them." Again I said to myself, "That is exactly what we do. We keep the girls and boys only a little while, then they are transplanted."

I had another question. "When they trans-

plant these little trees how do they plant them, haphazard, every-which-way?" "No, indeed," was his answer, "they are planted in rows, and close together." Exactly what we are doing in our church, I thought. We are growing our girls and boys, and we are keeping them close together, because they are such a help to one another, and there is great inspiration in numbers.

Looking out of the train window at those trees of future forests, I thought of the verse in Isaiah, "The mountains and the trees shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." I can hear the mountains and the hills of the Adirondacks singing because of the growing trees, and I hear the mountains and the hills of earth singing because of the millions of growing girls and boys who shall reforest the desolate places of earth.

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 92: 13

"Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God."

MEMORY HYMN [677]

"Saviour, like a shepherd lead us."

KNIFE LESSONS

I HAVE here a knife. It was given me by a friend, a token of his affection and esteem, when I went aboard the steamer in Manila, Philippine Islands, to return to the homeland. All these years since then the knife has been on my study desk, daily teaching me. What lessons does this knife teach?

First of all the knife tells me of Strength. The most important part of this knife is what I call the backbone. It is the main portion of the knife to which all the blades are fastened, as well as the polished pearl handle. This would be a weak and useless knife did it not have a backbone. It says to me every day "Be strong, stand up, have convictions, be steadfast."

Lesson number two, Discipline. This knife has been subjected to many trials and tests. The steel of which these blades are made had to go through a hard, hot, trying process before they were tempered and fit to take an edge and hold it. Sometimes I rebel about certain

processes of the days, then I think of my knife and learn from it the lesson of discipline.

The third lesson this knife teaches me is Neatness. Now I can picture the man who bought this knife. As he went into the store, he stood before the glass show case wherein were displayed scores of different kinds of knives. There were dark knives and light knives, big knives and little knives. His eye caught this knife, with its graceful lines, its smooth pearl handle, and he said, "That is a neat knife, I'll take that one." People are attracted to you by your neatness.

The fourth lesson is Usefulness. Really it is quite wonderful the variety of uses to which this knife can be put. Here is a big blade, and a small blade; here is a blade with a file; folded in the back is a tiny pair of scissors. So the great test of life is its usefulness.

MEMORY VERSE, *I Corinthians* 9: 22

"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

MEMORY HYMN [545]

"Jesus calls us."

LETTERS

WHO is the most popular man in your town? The Postman. Who is the man who is most eagerly looked for as he comes down the street? The Postman. Who receives, at every door where he stops, a most cordial welcome? The Postman. I wonder if the thrill of getting a letter will ever pass away. When you come home from school the first thing you do is to look on the hall table to see if the Postman has brought you a letter. It is the same when we grow up. No matter how many letters we may receive we never get over the keen delight at having the Postman bring us letters.

Last Sunday afternoon you wrote your grandmother. You said, "Only two months more of school and then I am coming to see you, and all the summer vacation I am going to play around your big house, and in the barn, and across the fields, and through the woods." On your way to school Monday morning, you posted that letter. Monday afternoon you began looking for an answer. Tuesday you were impatient

that you had not received a reply. Wednesday you were almost in tears, though, had you only stopped to think you would have known that it takes two days for a letter to get to your grandmother, she lives so far away. Thursday the answer came. "I am eager for vacation time to come so that you, my dear grandchild, may be here with me."

I have here an unusual book. It is a book of letters. All the letters were written by a big man, a father, to little children, his children. The man who wrote them was Theodore Roosevelt. What fortunate children were his! Not many fathers take time to write to their children as did our great president. Oh, for more fathers like Roosevelt! Oh, for appreciative children, who will not only gladly receive, but cheerfully write, letters of love!

MEMORY VERSE, *I John* 2: 12

> "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father."

MEMORY HYMN [544]

> *"I love to tell the story."*

A UNIQUE PSALM

I WANT to tell you about a unique Psalm. Which Psalm is it? It is the 119th.

The 119th Psalm is unique because of its length. It is the longest of the Psalms. It has one hundred and seventy-six verses.

It is unique because of its arrangement. It is divided into twenty-two equal parts. Each part contains eight verses.

Again, the 119th Psalm is an acrostic, or an alphabetical Psalm. It is built around the Hebrew alphabet. Each of the twenty-two portions begins with one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The Psalm is unique because of its content. It is given over entirely to a consideration of the law and commandments of God. Indeed, if you will read the Psalm, you will find that every verse says something about the precepts, or the statutes, or the commandments, or the word of God.

The 119th Psalm contains some of the verses with which we are most familiar. "Wherewithal

shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

The Psalm reaches its highest point, and finds its fullest expression in the 94th verse, three words, "I am thine."

Young people, I want you to read this 119th Psalm, and when you come to the 94th verse I want you to stop and say over very earnestly, very prayerfully, "I am thine." And may you be His for all time is my prayer.

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 119: 94

"I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts."

MEMORY HYMN [342]

"Lord, I am thine, entirely thine."

THE FATHER'S CARE

I HAVE here a nut. It is a pecan. It grows in our southern states. It is a well formed nut with a hard shell. This nut I have is cracked. I open it and I notice just inside a thin, brown coating that covers the meat. I touch this coating to my lips. It is bitter and causes me to pucker my lips. This is the Creator's blessed provision for the protection of the nut in its growing stage. The bitter coating keeps insects and pests away.

On my way to church this morning I looked up and saw a long piece of yarn flying across the street at a rapid rate. I wondered what could cause that. Then at the front end of the yarn I saw a bird. The bird flew to the gable of a big house. There, in a protected corner, she was making her nest. The yarn was to be woven into her new spring house. So God gives instinct to birds and all his creatures as a mark of his loving care.

The most delicate, sensitive portion of your body is the eye. When I consider how tender

and open to harm the eye is I wonder that so many of us go through life with our eyes unhurt. But God has provided a sleepless protection for our eyes. There is a guard, always on duty. Whenever danger comes near, that guard, our eyelid, closes and effectively wards off impending trouble.

We started with the lowest form of life, an inanimate nut. Now we come to the highest, the soul of man. For in each one of you there is something eternal, something akin to God himself. The name we give that eternal spirit is the soul. For the protection of our soul God gives us faith, a sense of right and wrong, conscience, the still small voice. He surrounds us with Christian homes, the Church, helpful fellowship, the means of grace. All these things are a protection for the soul.

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 6: 28, 29

> "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

MEMORY HYMN [517]

> *"While thee I seek, protecting power."*

YOKES

A YOKE is a help, not a hindrance. Our first thought is that a yoke is burdensome. A little study reveals to us the great usefulness of the yoke.

Have you ever seen a yoke of oxen? What heavy, slow-moving creatures they are! But they are pullers of heavy loads. These loads could not be drawn by them were they not yoked together.

Now there are different kinds of yokes, that is, there are many ways of rendering easier the carrying of heavy loads. For example, there is the Oriental way. First, there is the manner in which one man will carry a heavy load. He takes a pole, on each end of the pole hangs a rope. Then he divides his load, fastening half of his load to either rope. He gets beneath the pole, which is shaped to fit his shoulder, lifts, and off he trots as easily and jauntily as can be. Sometimes the load is too heavy for one man. He then summons a companion. They get a longer, heavier pole, with a much stouter rope.

This time they do not divide the load, rather they keep it together. They fasten the rope securely about it, and then tie it about the pole. The men stoop, one at each end of the heavy pole. They stand up straight, the load is lifted from the ground, only a few inches perhaps, but enough to clear the ground, then, singing and laughing, keeping perfect time each with the other, they swing down the street. It is incredible the heavy loads they carry. I could not believe my eyes when I looked upon some of them.

Jesus perfectly understood the helpfulness and value of the yoke. He made it most beautiful in that he told his followers that he would help them, that he would carry his part of the burden, that he would share with them the other side of the yoke.

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 11: 29-30

> "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

MEMORY HYMN [449]

> *"My times are in thy hand."*

GOOD ADVICE

MOST of us, men and women as well as girls and boys, do not take kindly to advice. We very much prefer that people keep their advice to themselves. There are times, however, when we are compelled to listen to advice, because of the source. Here is a bit of advice that commands our attention. It is from the great English novelist, Charles Dickens.

Charles Dickens' youngest boy, Edward, left home when he was sixteen years of age and went to Australia. His father wrote him a parting letter, which is worth while for all boys, whether or no they leave home. In that letter the great Dickens said,

"I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons and with the very same hopes that made me write an easy account of it for you when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was or ever will be in the world. And because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature

who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided. As your brothers have gone away, one by one, I have written to each such words as I am now writing to you and have entreated them all to guide themselves by this book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of men. Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it."

Now that we are done reading this letter it does not sound like advice at all, does it. It is all so wholesome and sturdy that we feel like speaking right out loud, "Thank you, Mr. Dickens, thank you very much."

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 119: 9

> "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? By taking heed thereto according to thy word."

MEMORY HYMN [205]

> *"Lamp of our feet."*

IF I WERE A BOY AGAIN

CHICAGO UNIVERSITY, one of the great schools of America and the world, received its impetus from the tireless energy and brilliant leadership of its great President, Dr. Harper. After his death there was found among his papers a memorandum which read as follows:

"If I were a boy again I would strive to find out from goods books how good men lived.

"If I were a boy again I would study the Bible even more than I did. I would make it a mental companion. The Bible is a necessity for every boy.

"If I were a boy again I would more and more cultivate the company of those older whose graces of person and mind would help me on in my good work. I would always seek good company.

"If I were a boy again I would study the life and character of our Saviour, persistently, that I might become more and more like unto him."

Now President Harper was a great, wise and good man. If he felt that he would do certain

things were he a boy again, surely the rest of us could improve upon our boyhood years had we the chance.

If I were a boy again I would be more attentive to Church and Sunday School and the things that were taught me there. If I were a boy again I would get my day school lessons with greater care. If I were a boy again I would be more obedient to and more thoughtful of my parents.

Why should I talk like this, for I cannot be a boy again? But you boys have your boyhood. It is a present reality. Let President Harper teach you. Be the boy he pictures.

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 103: 1-5

"Bless the Lord, O my soul . . . who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

MEMORY HYMN [678]

"By cool Siloam's shady rill."

ONE BY ONE

HERE is this great church building. It is a beautiful structure, is it not? It is so substantial, it has stood here so many years, we take it so for granted that it seems as though it had always been here. But there was a day when the ground upon which this building stands was vacant ground. Then men came with picks and shovels, wagons and plows, and set to work. They laid the foundations, stone upon stone. Then the walls rose, stone upon stone. Then the spire, stone upon stone, until the very peak was reached, for our church is stone from the foundation to the top of the spire. How were these thousands of stones put in place? One by one.

Think also of the roof of our church. It is a tile roof. How in the world did they get all those tile up on the roof and fitted in place? Did some man who was very strong stand back and throw a handful of tile at the roof? No, it was done one by one.

To-day it is snowing outside. Some one has

figured that in a square mile one foot of snow would weigh 65,000 tons. If you should take sleds and horses, and put a ton of snow on each sled, and arrange the horses and sleds in a procession, the sleds carrying the snow from that square mile of territory would reach from Philadelphia to New York, and beyond New York, straight up the Hudson, almost to Albany. That is only one square mile, and there are thousands of square miles every winter covered with snow. How does this snow come? In tiny flakes, one by one.

It is the same with life. God gives us many days, but he sends them one at a time. He also sends us many duties, but they do not come en masse. He is good and sends them one by one.

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 6: 34

> "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

MEMORY HYMN [419]

> *"One more day's work for Jesus."*

COME

THERE is not a girl or boy here this morning who does not feel within the desire to do good. The drawing power of good—in other words, the drawing power of God. He it is who says to you, "Come."

I want to illustrate this by a few things which I have here. The first is this magnet. And here are some small nails. These tiny nails represent girls and boys of about eleven or twelve years of age. I apply the magnet to these nails and I lift up—can you see me—twenty-five or thirty nails. You see it is a great deal easier to respond to the drawing power of good, to answer the great "Come," in girlhood and boyhood.

Now here are some nails that are a little larger. I can lift up only five or six of these larger nails. They represent young people of eighteen or nineteen. As one gets older he does not hear as readily, at least he does not answer, Christ's blessed "Come."

Next we have some nails still larger. The

magnet will lift up only one or two of these. They stand for men and women in mature life. Oh, if one has not responded to Christ's call in childhood or youth, it becomes increasingly difficult as the years pass. How seldom, how very seldom, does an aged one answer the divine call and give his heart to the Lord!

Here is a very large nail, and it is rusty. Indeed it is literally coated with rust. This represents the life that is deep in sin. For long years this life has been persisting in his evil ways. As the magnet must be very strong to penetrate the rust and grip the nail, so Christ's call must be strong and loving to reach the sinful soul. Christ can save "from the uttermost," but how much better it is to say in early youth, "I hear thy voice, my Lord. Gladly I come."

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 11: 28

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

MEMORY HYMN [462]

"In heavenly rest abiding."

LOVE AND LOYALTY

ONCE upon a time, long, long ago, there was a man who had a wife and two sons. There was a famine in the land where he lived, so he said to his wife and sons, "We will journey down to another country where the crops have not failed. There shall we find plenty to eat, and there will we make our home."

So the family moved to the strange land where they prospered and were happy. In time the boys grew to young manhood and married young women of the new land where they dwelt. Then sorrow entered their homes, as sorrow comes sooner or later to every home. The father and the two sons died, and the mother and her two daughters-in-law were left alone. The mother, whose name was Naomi, said, "I am going back to the land where I lived in former days, back to the people of my girlhood." The young women said, "We shall go with you also." "No," replied Naomi, "you must not do that. Go back to your homes, there you shall be cared for, and may the Lord deal gently with you."

The names of these two daughters-in-law were Ruth and Orpah. It was Ruth who then spoke up and said in words that are not surpassed in all the English language:

"Intreat me not to leave thee,
Or to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest I will go;
And where thou lodgest I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God my God;
Where thou diest will I die,
And there will I be buried;
The Lord do so to me, and even more,
If ought but death part thee and me."

Great words are these, words of love and loyalty.

MEMORY VERSE, *Exodus* 20: 12

"Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

MEMORY HYMN [668]

"O perfect love, all human thought transcending."

KUMMOGOKDONATTOOTTAMMOCTIT-EAONGANNUNNONASH

WHAT do you think of this word? It contains forty-two letters.

What does it mean? What language is it? It means "catechism." It is the Indian language.

Now for the story. Many years ago, soon after the landing of the first Pilgrim Fathers in New England, there was a man by the name of John Eliot, who came to this new and unsettled country of America. He was a devoted Christian, an earnest, patient, persistent missionary. He lived for sixty years in Massachusetts, and most of those years were spent among the redskins who inhabited that section. He loved them, worked with them, learned their language, reduced it to writing, then translated for them the Scriptures. He was called, and he is still known by the name, "Apostle to the Indians." The word at the head of the page shows what labors he entered into. All this was made possible through putting into practice his own

motto, "Prayer and pains, through faith in Christ, will do anything."

What good John Eliot did for the Indians some one must have done for the human race. Who invented the first alphabet? Who conceived the idea of letters? Who planned out the putting of certain letters together to form a word, then placing certain words in a string to form a sentence, that sentence conveying an idea? Who did all this? We do not know. The blessed work has gone on, until the knowledge of letters is so taken for granted that we have a saying, "as plain as A B C."

The Bible has almost kept pace with language. There are few languages to-day into which the Word has not been translated. We shall not rest until every child of every tongue is able to read God's message of love and salvation in the language in which he was born.

MEMORY VERSE, *Luke* 4: 16

> "And Jesus came to Nazareth . . . and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read."

MEMORY HYMN [200]

> *"O word of God incarnate."*

WHAT THE TREES SAID TO ME

ACROSS the street from my home is a large and beautiful park. It has inviting, winding paths, great quantities of flowers and many varieties of trees. Early one summer day, before most people were up, I strolled through the park. I thought I was all alone, but suddenly I heard a voice, "Stand erect. Do not walk with stooping shoulders. Head up, shoulders back!" Now I confess I was walking, and thinking as I walked, with shoulders bent and head forward. At once I straightened up and looked about to see who was speaking. It was the voice of a pine tree, growing hard by the path, tall and straight as a plumb line. "Thank you," I said to the pine.

No sooner had I left the pine, and was again deep in thought, when I heard another voice. "Be courteous, you can never accomplish anything by scolding, insulting or driving people. Be fair and just. Be like Christ, a Christian gentleman." Now who in the world is speaking to me? I looked everywhere and there was not

the sign of a person in all the park. "Here I am," the voice said. I looked and there, right before me, was a graceful elm tree, smiling and courteously bowing low to me. "I shall try and heed your word," I said.

Going on my way I was no longer absorbed in thought, for I knew that other trees would have something to say. Sure enough, "Be steadfast," I heard. What tree could that be? I should have known at once. The maple, of course.

Now the white birch beckons. How its face shines in the light of the early morning! But dark or light I can distinguish it from all its fellows. Always white of face and clean of life. So I hear it say, "Be clean."

Turning my steps homeward I said to the kindly trees, "Good-by, and thank you. I shall never forget this morning's walk."

MEMORY VERSE, *Isaiah* 61: 3

> "To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

MEMORY HYMN [745]

> *"Into the woods my Master went."*

BANKS

HERE is a bank. I have been reading lately about banks. You know that in Jesus' day they did not have banks such as we have. People took their treasures and jewels and hid them in a vessel, or dug a hole in the earth and covered their valuable possessions with dirt. But now one of the most prominent institutions of any community is the bank.

What does this bank stand for? In the first place it means Strength. It is made of very heavy, hard material. There is money in this bank. It does not belong to me, it is the property of our Beginners' Department. Each Sunday they put their birthday money in here, then at the end of the year they open it and the contents is given to our Sunday School Missionary Society. That the money may be kept safe and sound to the end of the year the bank is made very strong.

In the second place I notice that there is a single opening and that the opening is made very small. It is meant for small coins. I could

not possibly get a one dollar piece into this opening. No, it is meant for dimes, nickels and pennies. That is, it stands for Thrift. Each little child brings his or her amount, small in itself, but when they are all together there is a considerable sum.

Again, I see that this bank is made in the form of a church. It is really quite a beautiful building. Here is the steeple, here the steps and the wide entrance doors, and the windows with genuine cathedral glass. I think it is splendid to have a bank look like a church, for after all a church is a sort of bank. It stands for those treasures which Jesus talked about when he said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal."

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 6: 21

"For where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

MEMORY HYMN [208]

"I love thy kingdom, Lord."

WORK

THIS morning I want to talk to you about work. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." We are sorry for girls and boys who are compelled to work, who have little or no time for play. Now that is one side. How about the other side? All play and no work makes Jack—what? There are many words we can use here. I have thought about this a long time and I have decided that the best word to put in here is useless. All play and no work makes Jack a useless boy, and of all creatures in the world who have no place in the scheme of things it is one who is useless.

Now the men who are useful, we shall find, are the men who, as boys, worked as well as played. A few days ago I sat at a public dinner next to one of the best-known men in this city, and a useful man he is. We were talking about some of the things boys could busy themselves with and earn a little money. I said, "I carried papers when I was a boy." He replied, "I carried papers on the streets of New York City

when I was a boy." I do not doubt that if we could have gone to all the men who sat at that dinner each of the one hundred and fifty would have answered, "Yes, I worked when I was a boy."

I have here an illustration of work. Here are four nuts, a brazil nut, an almond, a walnut and a pecan. Each morning as you go to school you pass through the park. There in the park the squirrels are always to be seen, and to you they seem to be ever at play. There are days, warm spring days, lovely autumn days, when you do not like to go to school, and I hear you say, "I wish I could be like these squirrels, playing around all day long." But the squirrels do not play around all day long. They are at work, gathering nuts and storing them away for winter use. If I should give these nuts to the squirrels they would have to work to open them. All that is good in life comes through work. God wants us to work as well as play, and play as well as work.

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 21: 18

"Son, go work to-day in my vineyard."

MEMORY HYMN [422]

"Work, for the night is coming."

THE BIG STORE

MANY of the girls and boys who read this little book live in or near one of the great cities where they have huge department stores. I love to visit a big store. I have spent hours, more likely days, if I should count up all the time, in Wanamaker's in New York and Philadelphia, Marshall Field's in Chicago, Hengerer's in Buffalo, and Eaton's in Toronto. Any season of the year, and almost any hour of the day, these stores are thronged with people, for people like to go to the big store.

Now I am thinking of another big store, a truly big store, the great big store of Life. We have to visit at this store whether we want to or not. It is not a matter of choice but of necessity. Every morning you visit the big store of Life. Every evening you return home with what you have bought.

Not only must you visit this store but you must also buy. When you visit Wanamaker's you do not have to buy unless you choose. In the big store of Life, however, you have no

choice in the matter, you must buy. What must you buy? Well, you may buy anything you choose. This is the beautiful thing about the big store of Life—while we are compelled to buy we are permitted to choose. We must also pay.

"Good morning, John, what would you like to buy this morning."

"I think I'll buy a good geography lesson."

"All right, you can buy that, but you must pay the price."

"What is the price?"

"Study, earnest study. Never leave the preparation until the last minute or trust to luck."

Yes, it is true, right on through every department in the big store of Life, you can buy whatsoever you choose, but you must pay the price.

MEMORY VERSE, *Philippians* 4: 8

> "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things."

MEMORY HYMN [332]

> *"Thou my everlasting portion."*

BREAD

I HAVE here a loaf of bread. This is good-looking bread, is it not? I can almost hear you say, "Please pass the bread." That is, I hope you say that. I hope you do not say, "Gimme the bread."

Now every girl and boy here knows what it is to be hungry, I'm sure of that. And when one is real hungry there is nothing that tastes as good as bread. Of course there should be some butter, or jam, or peanut butter spread over the top—my, it makes the mouth water, doesn't it!

We speak of bread as the staff of life because we could not be strong in body if we did not have bread. We love ice cream and cake, meat and potatoes, and many other things, but our meal is not properly balanced unless there is a plate of bread on the table.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." I think this has a twofold meaning. It refers to our physical hunger and our spiritual needs. All bread comes from the

Father above, our Father of love. Do you remember those beautiful lines,

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour, the mill;
And back of the mill, the seed, and the sun,
and the shower,
And the Father's will."

Jesus once spoke of himself as the Bread sent down from above. Our Father gives us daily bread for our physical needs, and he has also sent us Christ for our spiritual strength. My dear young people, take him as your Saviour.

MEMORY VERSE, *John* 6: 51

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven."

MEMORY HYMN [325]

"Break thou the bread of life."

GOD'S MEASURE

HERE I have some measures. This is a rule, we call it a folding foot rule. Here is a square. And here is a tape measure. There are other measures, quarts and pecks and bushels. Then there are liquid measures, quarts and gallons and barrels. There are also measures of weight, ounces, pounds and tons. Now these different measures are the same all over the United States. A pound of butter in New York is the same as a pound of butter in California. There are other countries that do not have measures like ours. France, for example, has the metric system. Should you go into a dry goods store in Paris you would not ask for a yard of cloth, but for a meter.

God's measures are the same. God has a measure for girls and boys, and that measure is the same in Ohio, Mexico, England or Spain. If it is wrong to steal in Germany, it is wrong to steal in Brazil. If it was wrong to commit murder in the first century, it is wrong to take

life in this century. The Ten Commandments are some of God's measures for us.

John, come up here, I want to measure you. Stand there, that's right. I have the mark, now let us see how tall you are. Four feet, three and one-half inches. That is fine. You are a big boy, aren't you? I wish too that I could measure you according to God's measure. But I cannot do that. You must do that yourself. How tall are you as you look at yourself in the light of the Saviour's life? According to his measure I pray that you may be tall and strong.

MEMORY VERSE, *Ephesians* 4: 13

> "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

MEMORY HYMN [128]

> *"We may not climb the heavenly steeps."*

SLEEP

I HOPE you had a good sleep last night. I hope you sleep well every night. God's best gift to his children is sleep. You think there are some better gifts, do you? Name them. Ah, I thought you were mistaken. The more you think about it the more you will agree with me that sleep, the Father's loving provision for tired people, is a most blessed gift.

Now God gives sleep not only to girls and boys but to all of his creatures. Do you know how some of those creatures sleep? I will tell you. Elephants and horses commonly sleep standing up. How would you like to hear your mother say to you, "Robert, it's time to go to bed, stand in the corner there and sleep." Most birds sleep with the head turned toward the tail and the beak poked in under the feathers. Storks, gulls and all other long-legged birds sleep standing on one leg. It would be more difficult to sleep that way than just standing in the corner, wouldn't it? The fox and the wolf sleep with the tip of the nose and the soles of the

feet close together, and the big, bushy tail covering all to keep them warm. Owls sleep in the daytime. They have eyelids, and over the eyelids, curtains. These curtains are drawn across the eyes, sideways, and keep out the strong light of the day. Hares, snakes and fish sleep with their eyes open.

Why does God give us sleep? Is it for the pleasure of sleeping? No. He gives us sleep that our bodies and minds may be refreshed. The strength we have expended during the day is repaid us in the sleep of the night. Be grateful to your heavenly Father when to-night you kneel to pray:

"Now I lay me down to sleep."

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 127: 2

"So he giveth his beloved sleep."

MEMORY HYMN [541]

"Of all the thoughts of God."

ON TIME

I ONCE lived in a town of some five thousand population. In the center of the town was a public square, and at the most prominent corner of the square was a jeweler's store. In the window of the store was a clock which regulated the coming and going of nearly all the inhabitants. You see the children on their way to school had to pass this store, and they always glanced in the window to see if they were on time. People going away had to pass this store to get to the depot; they too looked at the jeweler's clock to see if they had plenty of time to make their train. The men who worked in the main factory of the town went by this corner; each man as he passed would pull out his watch and set it by the jeweler's clock.

Now one morning, for some reason or other, the clock was fifteen minutes slow. Children, hurrying to school, looked in at the window, and, seeing how much time they had they loitered and were late. Men and women, going

to the train or work, glanced at the clock, as was their custom, and, finding that they did not have to hurry some missed their train, while others were behind time at work.

We are all human clocks. We set the time for others. Your example, girls and boys, has much to do with the way other young people, your companions, act. If you, Mary, fail to get your lessons, some of your friends are going to say, "Mary doesn't study much and I'm not going to either." Robert, if you indulge in some bad habit your chum is going to say, "Robert does this and I guess I can too." Is your life clock running true? Are you on time?

MEMORY VERSE, *I Peter* 2: 21

"For hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps."

MEMORY HYMN [420]

"True-hearted, whole-hearted."

DOORS

THIS morning, after you were awake, you passed through your bedroom door. Then you went through the bathroom door. Later you entered, through a door, the dining room. After a time, with your father and mother, you left the house through the outside door. You walked down the street and here you are in church, having entered through yonder door. Every day you are passing through various doors. What wonderful things doors are! I wonder who invented doors. What would we do without doors?

There are doors to houses and there are doors to life. Let me tell you about them. A door is made of wood. What beautiful wood is in these church doors! The doors of life are made of our will. By the exercise of our will we open and close whatsoever doors of life we choose.

The doors of our houses swing on hinges. Heavy doors seem as light as a feather because they are so delicately hung upon hinges. The

hinges of the doors of life are made not of brass or iron, but of love.

When, in a little while, you leave this church you will take hold of a knob and pull open the door. The doors of life have knobs. Those knobs are called courtesy. You can open well nigh any door you choose if only you will use the knob courtesy.

What about the lock? Yes, doors have locks. So also have the doors of life. Can you guess what locks the door of life? It is faith. If you have faith, faith in God, faith in the Saviour, faith in things that are true and pure, you need never fear that your house of life will be broken into by burglars. You are secure if you have the lock of faith. Now here is a strange paradox, namely—you lock your door only by opening it. Open your door to the Master.

MEMORY VERSE, *Revelations* 3: 20

> "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me."

MEMORY HYMN [282]

> *"O Jesus, thou art standing."*

CHEAPEST AND BEST

A BUSINESS man would not consider this subject a very good advertisement. He believes that the best things are never cheapest. There are a few instances however in which that is not the case.

First, the air we breathe. It does not cost us anything, it isn't metered out to us, so we have a saying, "as free as air." You go down to the drug store and buy a bottle of perfume. A good perfume will cost not less than a dollar a bottle. The air we breathe is infinitely purer and better than the costliest perfume.

Second, the water we drink. Do you like ice cream soda? I am sure you do. If you do not you are not a normal girl or boy. How much do you have to pay for a good ice cream soda? That depends; some places it is ten cents and some fifteen cents. You think you might like to have ice cream soda every meal, but you would soon tire of it. The water you drink is necessary, and it costs you nothing.

Third, a book, that is this book, the Bible. If

you wish to buy an up-to-date book of fiction it will cost you anywhere from $1.00 to $3.00. But here is a book, the most popular, the most wonderful book that was ever written. You can buy a Bible for a few pennies, and if you do not have the pennies there is a great Bible Society that will give you a copy, that none may be without the Word of Life.

Finally, the things that are cheapest and best are the things of the soul, the spiritual ministries and influences of life. They are worship, communion, faith, hope, prayer and love. No one stands at yonder door and demands a dollar of you as you enter. The seats in this church are free to rich and poor, aged and young. These free seats typify the salvation that is here proclaimed.

MEMORY VERSE, *Isaiah* 55: 1

> "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

MEMORY HYMN [304]

> *"I heard the voice of Jesus."*

IN THE DARK

I HAVE here what are commonly known as Chinese lilies. Two weeks ago they were only two or three inches high. Now they are between two and three feet. How rapidly they have grown! How can we account for it? I can give one reason. It is because they had adequate preparation. The bulbs from which these lilies grew were kept in the dark for ten days. There, in the dark, they stored up strength and energy for the work that was before them.

Many years of our Saviour's life were spent in obscurity. They were years when, as far as the world is concerned, he was in the dark, preparing for the great work of his public ministry. My dear young people, do not be fretful over the days and years you have to go to school. They are not simply days of waiting, they are days of preparation.

Again, these lilies come from dark and humble surroundings. Here is a very plain dish. In the dish are a few ordinary stones picked up

in our yard. Water is poured upon the stones. Among these stones the lily bulbs take root. Girls and boys, it does not matter a great deal what sort of a home you have, if only it is a good home. John Wesley's youth was hid away in a poor Methodist parsonage. Abraham Lincoln was born and grew up in the dark and humble surroundings of a log cabin. Our Saviour himself was born in a manger, and his boyhood home was far from being a palace. Make the best of what you have and all will be well. God will take care of you and bring you out of the darkness.

How fragrant these lilies are! Faith, hope, love, patience, strength and truth, these fragrant qualities of life often grow best in the dark. May our good Father make your life fragrant is my prayer.

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 139: 12

> "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

MEMORY HYMN [460]

> *"Lead, kindly light."*

THE STILL SMALL VOICE

WHAT is the loudest noise you ever heard? Did you ever hear an immense cannon fired? Of course you have heard thunder. The loudest, most terrifying noise I ever heard was a boiler explosion. The town heating plant was only three doors from my home. The whole plant blew up one prayer meeting evening. The church building was plunged into darkness, the walls shook, windows were broken on every side. In terror people got down on their knees and crept toward the door. That was the loudest noise I ever heard.

Now I have here a hammer. I will drop it to the floor. Listen. Is the noise very loud? Here I have a heavy railroad spike. Hear the noise this makes as it is dropped. And now I shall drop this large nail. The noise that made is not nearly as loud as the noise occasioned by the falling hammer. Here is a small nail. You will have to listen very carefully if you hear the sound of the nail as it strikes the carpet. Have you good ears? Let us test them. Here is an

ordinary pin. If you keep very quiet you will be able to hear the falling of this tiny pin. Do not move in your seat. Every one, attention! Listen. Did you hear it? Yes, most of you did.

That pin did not make much noise. No sound could be more subdued than a dropping pin. Ah, but there is a sound that is infinitely more quiet. At the same time it is louder than the roll of thunder, or the firing of a huge cannon, or the explosion of a great boiler. Some call it "conscience." I like to think of it as a voice. It is the still, small voice within. When you go to do wrong this voice speaks to you. Hear the voice, and give good heed.

MEMORY VERSE, *I Kings* 19: 12

> "And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

MEMORY HYMN [320]

> *"I want a principle within."*

THANKSGIVING

WHAT does Thanksgiving mean to you? I hear one boy say, "It means a big dinner." I think we all agree with him. Who does not welcome and enjoy a good dinner! I hear Mary say, "Thanksgiving means a day off from school." I guess you are right too. School is not such a charming place that girls and boys are unwilling to have an occasional holiday.

Now I am going to ask some of the older people what the day means to them. There is a young woman. She is a stenographer. She says, "Thanksgiving means a day away from the office. I am at the office every day except Sunday, and I do appreciate, now and then, a day that is really my own." Yonder is a traveling salesman. What does Thanksgiving mean to you? He says, "It means a day at home. Last year I spent one hundred and sixty-nine nights away from home. I have three children. I should like to see them every day. There are times when many days pass and I do not see

them. Thanksgiving week I plan to be at home."

There are others I could ask. Each has his answer. But Thanksgiving has a special meaning for us. It is the Harvest time. I have here an apple. Isn't this a beautiful apple? What color! Who mixed the paints, who handled the brush to give such color to this apple? God. He, in his infinite love and wisdom, has provided, through the unfailing laws of nature, for the growth, sweetness, coloring and beautifying of all the products of the fields. This apple is but one of many kinds of fruits.

Praise, then, is the great meaning of Thanksgiving. God, our heavenly Father, sends us every good gift. From his bountiful hand come our daily and nightly mercies. We should praise him every day. But the day for the united chorus of praise is Thanksgiving.

MEMORY VERSE, *Psalm* 150: 6

"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

MEMORY HYMN [717]

"Come, ye thankful people, come."

MARBLES IN THE POCKET

DO you know what a Missionary Box is? Well, I will tell you. It is a box or barrel sent from a missionary society in a city or town to a missionary family or school on the frontier. The box contains clothing, bedding, and sometimes toys, dolls and picture books if there are children at the frontier end of the journey.

In a certain city one Christmas season the children of the Sunday School brought gifts to fill a box. Some brought clothes they had outgrown. Some who had two coats decided they could give one. Others brought books. One little girl brought a beautiful doll. She had other dolls, and this one she dearly loved, but she said, "I want some other little girl to be happy, and I think I can get along without this doll, though I shall miss her dreadfully."

One day the committee came together to sort the gifts and pack the box. One woman picked up a boy's coat. She felt something hard in one of the pockets. Another woman said, "Better

look all through those pockets; you can never tell what a boy will use his pockets for." So she went all through the pockets. In one of them she found a soiled handkerchief tied in a knot. With much pulling, for it was a hard knot, she loosed the little package, and there she found five marbles. With the marbles was a note scrawled in a boy's hand—

"DEAR BOY WHO GETS THIS COAT,

I have eight marbles. First I put in four for you. Then I put in another one. I hope you will like the coat, and the marbles.

From your friend,

JOHN MASON."

Now what do you think of that? Isn't it glorious? To give more to the other fellow than you keep for yourself, especially when that other fellow is some one you have never seen, is Christlike.

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 7: 12

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

MEMORY HYMN [411]

"O Master, let me walk with thee."

THE FIRST MONTH

WHAT month is this? December. It is the first month in the year. "No, no," you say, "December is the last month." I cannot entirely agree with you. December is last on the calendar but first in importance. Now you agree with me, do you not?

How many days has December? One day. "No, no," I again hear you say, "December has thirty-one days." I think we can reach an agreement on this point too. There is one day in December of unexcelled importance and loveliness; that day is the twenty-fifth. Yes, we all say there is but one day in December. How readily we agree when we understand one another!

What is the twenty-fifth? It is the pivotal day in the history of the world. It is the day upon which the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords was born. Jesus, son of man and son of God, came into the world as we all come, as a tiny babe. It brings him much nearer to us, does it not, to think that our Saviour was

once as we are? He grew up as a child, a boy, a youth, a man. It is the birthday of Christ the Saviour we celebrate on the twenty-fifth of each December.

To whom did Jesus come? He came to a lowly people. He was revealed first of all to the shepherds. The shepherd's task was not an enviable one. He was out in the open, subject to storms and winds and wild beasts. His business was to shepherd the sheep, to lead them to good pasture, to protect them from all harm and danger. The shepherd's task was lonely as well as lowly. His days and nights were passed in solitude. Occasionally a group of shepherds would come together, but for the most part they were alone with their flocks. God chose these people, whose minds were clear, whose lives were pure, to be the first messengers of the glad tidings of great joy.

MEMORY VERSE, *Luke* 2: 8

> "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night."

MEMORY HYMN [115]

> *"While shepherds watched their flocks."*

HIM AND HYMN

I WANT to tell you to-day about two "Hims." The first is a man "Him." The second is a song "Hymn."

The man "him" is Phillips Brooks. He was born in 1835 and died in 1893. He never married, so he had no girls and boys of his own. But he loved all children. He had a great, warm heart, and in that heart was a big corner for all young people. He became a minister. His first church was in Philadelphia. Later he moved to Boston. He had not been in Boston very long when, one night, about midnight, the people saw flames breaking out through the roof of the church. A sorrowing congregation, with their pastor, watched their loved church as it burned to the ground.

When, after the fire, they came together, they inquired, "What shall we do? Shall we rebuild here or shall we take another location?" Finally it was decided to build a new church on Copley Square. That was many years ago. They built a beautiful temple of worship. It

is still known everywhere as "Phillips Brooks' Church," so wonderfully did his personality enter into the project.

Now the second "hymn." When Phillips Brooks was a young man in Philadelphia he made a trip to the Holy Land. As Christmas drew near he wrote and sent back to the girls and boys of his Sunday School, a Christmas poem. The organist of his church composed music for the words, and this hymn was sung for the first time in Trinity church, Philadelphia. It is a beautiful Christmas hymn. Yes, it is my favorite.

"Oh, little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie."

MEMORY VERSE, *Matthew* 2: 6

"Thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: For out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel."

MEMORY HYMN [121]

"O little town of Bethlehem."

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

FOR a few years I lived in a country where "December is as pleasant as May." The weather was warm all through the year. The ground was never frozen, for there was never any frost. I never saw a snowflake in all the years I lived in the tropics. The trees were trees of the hot climate, mostly palm, bamboo and acacia trees. When Christmas drew near I thought the day would be a very dreary day, and wholly unChristmaslike because there would be no snow, and we would be without our accustomed tree.

A few days before our first Christmas in the tropics a friend said to me, "I am sending a tree down from the mountains for your children." In due time the tree arrived. You can imagine the joy of our entire household when they looked upon a genuine, evergreen, Christmas tree. We set it up in our big "sala," that is our living room, and there it remained for many days, the delight of our eyes.

The tree of the Christmas season has some

specifically Christmas messages. First, it is evergreen. That reminds us of the eternal Saviour, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever." At the very tiptop of the tree we place a star. There it shines, high above all else, reminding us of the higher, holier life to which we are summoned. The star beckons us to loftier aspirations. Christ came down from heaven. He became one of us, sharing our human life. But he is ever above us as well as with us, luring us on to the life of God. The Christmas tree is ablaze with lights. Jesus brought light into the world. How dark the world would be without him! About the base of the tree, and suspended from the branches are many gifts. They are tokens of the love and esteem we hold for each other, and remind us of God's great gift of love, Christ himself.

MEMORY VERSE, *John* 3: 16

> "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

MEMORY HYMN [112]

> *"There's a song in the air."*

THE BEST WORD

WHAT is the best word! I think I can hear each of you as he answers. One says "Mother is the best word." Another says, "Father." Still another, "Daddy." A fourth one answers, "Home." Now I hear a voice that says, "America." Another voice shouts, "Friend." Yes, there are many, many words to which we might rightfully give the title "best word."

But for this season of the year, and for this particular Sunday, there is one word that stands out from among all the others. That one word is "Christmas." To-morrow will be Christmas day. I think this word "Christmas" is the best word because it includes all the other good words.

In your home you have a rug. There are many colors in that rug, yet it is all one fabric. The many colors are skillfully woven and beautifully blended to make the one fabric. Think of this word Christmas as a rug, made up of many words of many colors. We see in this

rug the word "mother." What would Christmas be without mother! We see also the word father, and the words sister, brother, grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, friend, home. Then clearest of all in this wonderful rug is the word Christ. Christ is Christmas. Yes, Christmas is the best word for it gathers within its meaning all other good words.

"This happy day, whose risen sun
Shall set not through eternity;
This holy day, when Christ, the Lord,
Took on him our humanity;
For little children everywhere
A joyous season still we make;
We bring our precious gifts to them,
Even for the dear Child, Jesus' sake."

MEMORY VERSE, *John* 1: 4

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

MEMORY HYMN [107]

"Joy to the world!"

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

HOW often have we heard this phrase! You girls and boys use it, "Here I am, last but not least."

When Jesus was on earth there was often a discussion among the disciples concerning rank among them. Some were fearful that they would be last. One day a mother, very proud of her two sons, as mothers are apt to be, asked Jesus to grant permission that her two sons might sit, the one on his left hand, the other on his right, in the kingdom. Then He made a very beautiful as well as perfectly true statement, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

There was another time, when Jesus sat at supper with his disciples, wishing to show them, by example, the utter worthlessness of station, for station's sake, rose from the table, took a towel and basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. Peter objected, but when he understood,

he said, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." At the last Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

Girls and boys, if you desire a high place in life, begin low. If you want to occupy a leading place you must be willing to serve in the least. It always has been so, it will never change, this great law of life, that he who would be first must be willing to be last. It is the eternal law of service.

MEMORY VERSE, *Mark* 10: 31

". . . But many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

MEMORY HYMN [402]

"Hark, the voice of Jesus calling."

THE END

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